

| Item No. | Application No. and Parish | Statutory Target Date | Proposal, Location, Applicant |
|----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| (3) | 23/01116/HOUSE Great Shefford | 14 July 2023 ¹ | Proposed two storey side and rear extensions. The Old Post House, Newbury Road, Shefford Woodlands, Hungerford, RG17 7AG Ms A McAlpine |

¹ Extension of time agreed with applicant until 18 August 2023

The application can be viewed on the Council's website at the following link:

<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=23/01116/HOUSE>

Recommendation Summary: To delegate to the Development Control Manager to **REFUSE** planning permission for the reason given in section 8

Ward Member(s): Councillor Clive Hooker

Reason for Committee Determination: Ward Member call in

Committee Site Visit: 14 September 2023

Contact Officer Details

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This application seeks planning permission for a two-storey side extension and two storey rear extension.
- 1.2 The application site is located outside a defined settlement boundary and is within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Beauty. It forms part of a small rural cluster of dwellings to the east of a wider 18th-century settlement, and is surrounded by open rural and agricultural fields.
- 1.3 A structure has existed on the footprint of the Old Post House since at least the mid-19th century. The original dwelling, by the name of Pineapple Cottage, was of a rectangular form, with the ground floor extending southwards by 4 metres. The dwelling was extended to the south and east between 2010 and 2015, forming a two-storey L-shape. A utility room was then added to the rear of the ground floor in 2017. Within the curtilage, Pineapple Cottage was an approximately 30 sq m single storey outbuilding, which was demolished and replaced with a nearly 60 sq m outbuilding with a higher pitched roof to accommodate an attic in 2016.

2. Planning History

- 2.1 The table below outlines the relevant planning history of the application site.

| Application | Proposal | Decision / Date |
|-----------------|--|-------------------------|
| 05/02738/HOUSE | Wooden cabin in garden and garage workshop | Approved 21/02/2006 |
| 06/01441/HOUSE | Single storey detached car port | Approved 09/08/2006 |
| 06/01566/HOUSE | Two storey side extension; demolition of front porch and replace with conservatory | Withdrawn 19/09/2006 |
| 07/01047/HOUSE | Erection of a two storey extension | Approved 30/07/2007 |
| 10/01554/NONMAT | Application for non-material amendment to application 07/01047/HOUSE - Amendment - Replace exterior walls on southern elevation and end of house squared off on the southern elevation | Approved 03/08/2010 |
| 16/01502/HOUSE | Demolition of garage, car port and outbuilding and replacement with single outbuilding, with attic storage above | Approved 27/07/2016 |
| 17/01025/HOUSE | Addition of utility to rear of kitchen | Approved 04/07/2017 |
| 21/02640/HOUSE | Proposed rear/side single storey extension, proposed front/side 2 storey extension and porch, new windows | Withdrawn 30/12/2021 |

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| 22/00802/HOUSE | Proposed side extension | Refused 25/05/2022 |
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3. Procedural Matters

- 3.1 EIA: Given the nature and scale of this householder development, it is not considered to fall within the description of any development listed in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. As such, EIA screening is not required.
- 3.2 Publicity: Site notice displayed on 16/06/2023 at the front of the site; the deadline for representations expired on 07/07/2023.
- 3.3 CIL: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a levy charged on most new development to pay for new infrastructure required as a result of the new development. CIL will be charged on residential (C3 and C4) and retail (A1 - A5) development at a rate per square metre (based on Gross Internal Area) on new development of more than 100 square metres of net floorspace (including extensions) or when a new dwelling is created (even if it is less than 100 square metres).

The CIL Team have identified this application as potentially being CIL liable. However, CIL liability will be formally confirmed by the CIL Charging Authority under separate cover following the grant of any permission. More information is available at www.westberks.gov.uk/cil

4. Consultation

Statutory and non-statutory consultation

- 4.1 The table below summarises the consultation responses received during the consideration of the application. The full responses may be viewed with the application documents on the Council's website, using the link at the start of this report.

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| Great Shefford Parish Council: | No response. |
| WBC Highways: | Response 23/05/2023, no objection. |
| Public Rights of Way | Response 31/05/2023, no objection however provided informatives. |
| Archaeology | Response 01/06/2023, no objection. |
| North Wessex Downs AONB | No response. |
| Ecology | No response. |
| Ramblers | No response. |

Public representations

4.2 No letters of representation have been received on this application.

5. Planning Policy

5.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The following policies of the statutory development plan are relevant to the consideration of this application.

- Policies ADPP1, ADPP5, CS14, CS17, CS18, CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (WBCS).
- Policies C3, C6 of the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2006-2026 (HSA DPD).

5.2 The following material considerations are relevant to the consideration of this application:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-19
- WBC House Extensions SPG (2004)
- WBC Quality Design SPD (2006)
- Planning Obligations SPD (2015)

6. Appraisal

6.1 The main issues for consideration in this application are:

- Scale and impact on the local rural character

Principle of development

6.2 Whilst development is to be limited in the open countryside (ADPP1), there is a presumption in favour of extensions to existing permanent dwellings (C6 of HSA DPD), provided that the design, scale and impact on the setting, character and neighbouring residents is appropriate and respectful (CS14, CS19 C3, C6). In the North Wessex Downs AONB, development should also preserve and enhance the natural beauty of the setting (ADPP5).

6.3 The extension this application proposes has an overall appealing visual design and chooses materials that are in-keeping with the existing dwelling and local architecture. However, it fails to comply with Policy C6(i) as the extension does not achieve subservience to the original dwelling. Additionally, the cumulative extensions on the original dwelling as it was built are extensive and thus have a notable impact on the setting and character of the landscape, considerably increasing the associated visual prominence of the dwelling and its intrusion within the street scene and surrounding views contrary to Policy C6(ii) and Supporting Text 4.51, 4.52.

Character and appearance

6.4 The previously proposed two storey side extension for this dwelling was refused (22/00802/HOUSE) due to the design being unattractively utilitarian and was thus

considered as contrary to policies CS14 and CS19 of the Core Strategy, policies C3 and C6 of the Housing Site Allocations DPD, SPG 04/2 House Extensions and the NPPF. The current application has made clear improvements in response to this, proposing alterations that would result in a more traditional appearance, with features evocative of the local 19th century architecture. For example, the flush casement windows, an arched window on the proposed hall entrance – which is itself reminiscent of the nearby listed building Shefford Woodlands House – and painted brick.

- 6.5 Whilst the materials and overall appearance have successfully been improved upon, this is not sufficient to overcome the previous issue of scale and the impact this has on the setting and local rural character.
- 6.6 Individually, the large scale and massing of the dwelling could be seen as acceptable due to it being situated within a large plot, meaning it does not overwhelm the curtilage in question. However, the proposed extension subsumes the existing dwelling, and would alter the existing shape and form to a significant degree, resulting in a considerably larger set of extension that entirely subsume the original dwelling, and render it impossible to read in the new structure. This would permanently alter the character and appearance of the dwelling, rendering it considerably more prominent and intrusive in surrounding views, contrary to Policies C3 and C6.
- 6.7 Collectively, taking into consideration the two-storey extension (2007), outbuilding with an attic (2016) and rear kitchen extension (2017), the cumulative increase from the original building as built is significant. Excluding the outbuilding, the floor space increase from the original to the proposed two storey side and rear extensions would be 184%, which is larger than the increase proposed in the previously refused application (140%). The increase would be over 200% if including the outbuilding. While taken in isolation this increase in overall size does not render a proposed extension unacceptable, as a result of the amount of cumulative extension to the dwelling the nature of the site and its appearance within the surrounding screen scene and landscape would significantly change.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.8 The immediate neighbouring amenity is Forge Cottage, a late 19th century flint and brick dwelling that was once a part of a blacksmith's workshop. It is situated 8 m from The Old Post House, on the opposite side of a narrow road. The areas being extended are mostly set back, obscured by fencing, hedges and trees, and the dwelling is not easily visible from the 13/1 footpath (although this was observed during the summer wherein vegetation cover would be greatest). The extensions would not overshadow the neighbouring amenity although the visual impact in views from these neighbouring dwellings would be increased. However, this is not considered to result in any overbearing impact such as might merit the refusal of this application.
- 6.9 There is a general pattern of a decrease in dwelling scale the further east into Shefford Woodlands one travels. There is a risk of The Old Post House impacting views of the setting by imposing on the landscape should its size increase again, particularly as the public footpaths 13/1 and 13A/1 are approached from Newbury Road.

Ecology

- 6.10 Bats and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Regulations) transpose the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) into national law. Schedule 2 of the Regulations lists all species of bats as being European Protected Species of

animals. It is an offence, subject to exceptions, to, amongst other things, kill or disturb animals listed in Schedule 2; this includes a single bat, not just a population of a species. However, these actions can be made lawful through the granting of licenses by the appropriate authority (Natural England), but only after it is satisfied that there are no satisfactory alternatives and such actions will have no detrimental effect on the species concerned.

- 6.11 It is incumbent on the local planning authority to establish if works being applied for could potentially affect bats, their breeding sites or resting places, which are fully protected by law. In this case, the proposed works would involve replacing a roof and renovating a building. These are included within the list of activities that could potentially affect bats set out in Government Guidance (Bats: protection and licences (published 8 October 2014, updated 29 March 2015)); if bats were present, therefore, the works could, at the very least, disturb them.
- 6.12 An initial bat survey was conducted over 12 months in the past. It states that another survey, or at least a detailed method statement, would be necessary following this length of time given the potential for roosts to have formed in this period. In response, a secondary bat survey was carried out and provided July 2023. This finds negligible potential for roosting bats to be present internally or externally.

7. Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 7.1 While the proposed works are of a good quality of design in themselves, they fail to achieve subservience to the existing dwelling, and cumulatively, when taken with previous extension works to the dwelling, would entirely subsume the original dwelling, fundamentally altering the character and appearance of the dwelling in the street scene. Therefore the works are considered to result in a disproportionate set of extensions to the dwelling that would fail to comply with the requirements of Policy

8. Full Recommendation

- 8.1 To delegate to the Development Control Manager to REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION for the reason below.

Refusal Reasons

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| 1. | <p>Title Scale and impact The original dwelling was of a rectangular form, with the ground floor extending southwards by 4 metres. The dwelling was extended to the south and east between 2010 and 2015, forming a two-storey L-shape and a utility room was added to the rear of the ground floor in 2017. Despite these extensions, the original form of the dwelling can clearly be read in the form and design of the existing dwelling.</p> <p>The extensions proposed under this application do not achieve subservience as they would subsume the existing dwelling, fundamentally altering the form and scale. Furthermore, the dwelling and additional buildings within the curtilage have substantially increased since the original dwelling was built. It is therefore considered that the proposed works would further increase the visual prominence of the dwelling on the street scene, changing the nature of the existing character of the</p> |
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street scene to an inappropriate degree and resulting in an overly conspicuous dwelling within its surroundings by comparison to its original modest form.

The application does not therefore achieve compliance with the NPPF, Policy C3 and C6 of the Housing Site Allocations DPD (2006-2026), Policies ADPP1, ADPP5, CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), SPD Quality Design West Berkshire and SPG 04/2 House Extensions.